

The Semaphore

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Issue 206

Summer 2014



North Beach Legacy Bars & Restaurants
See Page 8

THE NORTH BEACH LIBRARY SAGA

By Catherine Accardi

It's true! The new North Beach Library is OPEN!

San Franciscans turned out in numbers on May 10 for the opening of the new North Beach Branch Library. Crowds gathered at 850 Columbus Ave. under bright, sunny skies eager to experience this new public space. The sounds of Mal Sharpe and his jazz band mixed well with sounds from the Mason Street cable cars passing by. The community celebration and ribbon cutting included remarks from Mayor Ed Lee, District 3 Supervisor David Chiu and City Librarian Luis Herrera.

Yes, our new stunning “triangle” library is open. However, this is not the beginning, or end, of the story. While the triangle is the latest version, it is actually the fifth version. We all know this new library replaced the previous 55-year-old structure at 2000 Mason St., but did you know it was the fourth incarnation and that No. 3 was the replacement for No. 2 and so on? Does this seem confusing? Let me explain.

The North Beach Library saga began in the mid-1800s, well before the Carnegie Library Grant



Soaring ceilings and a modern, fresh interior welcomes patrons.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CATHERINE ACCARDI



Program financed seven major libraries here beginning in the early 1900s. At that time city branch libraries were located in rented spaces. According to early San Francisco Free Public Library Board of Trustees Reports, the first North Beach branch (identified as Branch No. 3) was located in a rented space at 1801 Stockton St. The trustee report of 1893 indicates there were a total of 841 books on its shelves. In 1909, a new branch, this would be No. 2, opened at 1457 Powell St., near Vallejo, after the 1906 fire destroyed the Stockton Street building. Our neighborhood repository for books remained on Powell Street until 1921.

Now, for the story of library No. 3, a Carnegie-funded library at 1141 Powell St., between Washington



The North Beach Branch Library (now the Chinatown branch) as it stood at 1135 Powell St.

PHOTOGRAPH ACQUIRED FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

and Jackson streets.¹ Built in 1921 by architect Gustave Albert Lansburgh, it was the sixth of seven Carnegie branch libraries built in San Francisco. This outstanding example of the Italian Renaissance style of architecture was designated San Francisco Landmark No. 235 on May 2, 2002.

The Carnegie Libraries of California Project website (<http://www.carnegie-libraries.org>) explains the evolution of San Francisco's libraries in this way:

“In accordance with the 1901 letter from Andrew Carnegie to Mayor James Phelan, promising \$750,000 for a main library and branches, the Carnegie funds were allocated more or less one half for a main library and the remainder for branches. The city paid the difference between the main library's Carnegie share and its \$1,152,000 total cost. The branch share was divided among seven libraries. All of the branches still serve as libraries.

“The North Beach Carnegie branch is located on the uphill side of Powell Street, a residential and commercial neighborhood just a block above Stockton Street, one of Chinatown's busiest streets. The sixth San Francisco Carnegie branch occupies almost the whole of its 70-foot-by-137-foot lot on a steeply sloping site, said to be the largest unoccupied space available in what was then ‘the Italian and foreign quarters of the city,’ then as now, a very populous district. The site was city owned, formerly occupied by a school, but much excavation was required and the total cost was \$68,186.”

The landmark Carnegie library at 1141 Powell served the North Beach community proudly from 1921 to 1958. In 1958, the library's name was changed to the Chinatown branch in order to more accurately reflect a shift in the composition of the neighborhood it served. As footnoted, along with the name change came a building number change from 1141 to 1135 Powell St.

A new North Beach branch was built at 2000 Mason St. in 1959, adjacent to the Joe DiMaggio Playground. That was No. 4, which brings us back to No. 5, 850 Columbus.

The new 2014 North Beach Library is the last of 24 city branches built or renovated with the bond funds approved by voters under the Branch Library

¹ It should be noted that the building number for this North Beach branch was originally 1141 and remained such until 1959 when it was changed to 1135, coinciding with the name change from the North Beach branch to the Chinatown branch.



The new North Beach Library on Columbus Avenue between Lombard and Greenwich streets.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CATHERINE ACCARDI



A crowd gathers at 850 Columbus Ave. for the opening ceremony of the new North Beach Branch Library on May 10.

Improvement Program. Funding was secured from voter-approved Proposition D in November 2007.

Designed by the firm of Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects, the new library offers 8,500 square-feet, within a two-story building, including a community room with after-hours access for neighborhood meetings. The structure is 60 percent larger than the previous library with separate rooms for adults, children and teenagers. Of particular note are the strategically placed windows, generous in size, allowing in plenty of light. These are not ordinary windows. They are portals framing fascinating views of San Francisco; Coit Tower, the spires of Saints Peter and Paul Church and glimpses of the bay, an extra bonus for patrons to enjoy.

As we can see from these photographs, the interior is airy and modern. It feels as optimistic as a clean, fresh breeze blowing in through the Golden Gate, something our great City by the Bay appreciates and understands quite well.

ROSIE, THE READING LADY

By Miriam Owen

Rosie Vidaver is The Reading Lady. It is a title she assumed after her friend and neighbor Vera Ransom, suggested it. Rosie had been reading to Vera for several years after her elderly neighbor, nearly blind, could no longer read herself. What began as a gesture of generosity and bonhomie between two longtime friends, has evolved into a private reading service. For Rosie it is the dream job, created out of her fondest interest, reading. Vera, who passed away in 2013 just shy of becoming 100, was the catalyst for Rosie turning her passion for reading into a business.

Rosie began our chat by telling me a story of when she was an English teacher at Balboa High School in the 1960s. She was given a class of what she described as “reluctant” students. It was a Compensatory Education class, with students she was tasked to help acquire basic literacy skills. In order to assure that each student would find reading a book interesting, Rosie initiated a book drive, collecting paperbacks from all around the Bay Area. Jack Carney of KSFO radio helped her by announcing a call for the donation of paperbacks to her class. The book drive was quite successful and with a classroom full of diverse books, each student chose a book to read. In order to create discussion topics, Rosie selected a broad topic such as, “Is there a character in

the book you are reading who reminds you of someone you know?” Rosie was a teacher who cleverly focused her students of the pleasure of reading.

Rosie is still trying to help people focus on the pleasure of reading, only now it is for people who love books, but can no longer see well enough to read. She calls herself The Reading Lady. Her business is a private reading service offered to people in the San Francisco Bay Area. She reads the material her clients select; books, journals, or magazines. Sessions generally last two hours, and can be as often as twice a week. She hopes the readings captivate the mind and provide intellectual enjoyment. Her main competition these days is audio books, but as Rosie says, “I think I am way more fun than audio.” She has her work cut out for her to educate a public on the idea of a personal reader versus the audio alternative. Rosie points out how it is easier to zone out while listening to audio books. On her website, thereadinglady.com, she opines: “Hearing a work read aloud is a special pleasure to savor; sharing the experience is even more rewarding.”

In reminiscing about reading aloud to Vera, Rosie says, “We had wonderful times together reading great books that allowed us to enjoy a wide range of new adventures.” The Reading Lady’s mission is more than simply reading to a person who needs her eyes to travel the adventures of a novel or the details of history or biography. She aims to foster personal relationships that enhance another’s well being. In this day and age of “social media” connecting, Rosie is offering a real human-to human-connecting, as well as a connection to a wider world, through a book.

Contact Rosie Vidaver at rosie@thereadinglady.com or by phone at 415-902-2328. Visit her website at www.rosiethereadinglady.com.



Rosie Vidaver


PHOTOGRAPH BY MIRIAM OWEN



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FROM THE DESK OF SUPERVISOR CHIU



As we enjoy our longer summer hours, I want to thank those of you with whom I've worked to address affordability and health and safety concerns in our northeast neighborhoods and throughout the city.

Addressing Safety Concerns on Telegraph Hill

In mid-June, at the request of Telegraph Hill residents concerned about the level of streetlighting in the neighborhood, my office convened a group that went on a lighting-and-safety walk after dark to better understand the situation. My aide Catherine Rauschuber, along with San Francisco Public Utilities Commission staff, visited areas where streetlights were not working properly and noted several locations that could potentially use additional lighting. On the walk, we heard from residents and representatives of the Neighborhood Watch group, who reported on several recent car break-ins, as well as others who voiced different safety concerns. The next steps will be for the SFPUC to analyze the information they gathered and come up with proposals for lighting changes, after which our office will convene a neighborhood meeting (likely in mid-to-late summer) to discuss the proposals. I understand that safety concerns must be balanced with concerns that too much lighting can be extremely disruptive. I am optimistic we will be able to find solutions that work for everyone. For more information, please contact Catherine at Catherine.Rauschuber@sfgov.org.

Announcing the Winners of Year Two of Participatory Budgeting

In our second year of participatory budgeting, District 3 residents and leaders met several times to brainstorm about how to spend \$100,000 of discretionary funding. After discussing community needs

and priorities, residents proposed projects such as pedestrian safety measures, fitness classes, streetlighting enhancement, water-bottle filling stations in parks and a neighborhood information kiosk, among many others. Along with our partners in Districts 7 and 10, the top project ideas were put on a ballot, and voting took place in May. The project winners can be found at sfpb.net. Congratulations to those with winning proposals and to all who participated!

Legalizing Existing In-Law Units and Addressing Affordability

I'm proud to report that my proposal to create a pathway for legalizing existing in-law units was recently passed by the Board of Supervisors and signed into law by Mayor Ed Lee. These estimated 30,000-40,000 units are an important part of the city's affordable-housing stock, but they may not meet life-safety building requirements because they were created without proper permits. My legislation will enable homeowners to bring in-law units into compliance with existing building and planning codes and help clarify landlord and tenant obligations.

After two decades of debate on the topic, legalizing in-law units is a historic policy change; however, there is still more work to be done to solve the city's housing crisis. In May, I announced a proposal to regulate short-term rentals to prevent the loss of residential housing and assist residents in affording their rents and mortgages. Also, the city launched our Ellis Act Housing Preference Program (EAHP) to give tenants facing eviction priority on the city's affordable-housing waiting lists. I am excited to announce that already there have been evicted tenants who have been matched with affordable rental and homeownership units. I will continue to focus my work on the affordability crisis to help families and residents stay in San Francisco, includ-

ing protecting tenants, preserving our residential-housing stock and developing more affordable housing.

Taking Care of Our First-Responders

In response to the surge in cancer rates among San Francisco's first-responders, I recently announced legislation that aims to protect those who are facing debilitating illness as a result of their service. Multiple studies have shown a correlation between toxic exposure and cancer among first-responders. In one national study, the incidence rate of mesothelioma was two times greater among firefighters than in the general population, indicating likely occupational exposures to asbestos. My legislation would establish a presumption that cancer contracted by a firefighter or police officer is job-related, unless there is evidence to the contrary. This "cancer presumption" will mean that San Francisco first-responders would have a greater chance of receiving disability-based retirement and related benefits, as they do in other California jurisdictions. It is tragic that so many men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect San Franciscans suffer so greatly as a result of their service. As a city, we need to take action to better protect and support these heroes and their families.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me or my staff with any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

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COLUMBUS AVENUE PLANNING: MIXING URBAN INGREDIENTS CORRECTLY

By Howard Wong, AIA, former chair of THD Parking & Transportation Committee, founding member of SaveMuni

Columbus Avenue has the intrinsic ingredients to rival any great street in the world.

"In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it."

— Michelangelo

Like Michelangelo freeing the statue of David trapped inside a marble block, a great Columbus Avenue streetscape already resides within the city's genetic code. On a map of San Francisco, the diagonal Columbus Avenue, part of the 1905 Burnham Plan and City Beautiful movement, connects the Financial District/ down-

town to Fisherman's Wharf — anchored by the Transamerica Pyramid to the south and the Cannery to the north. Along its entire length, this natural circulation spine meshes with vibrant neighborhoods, cafés, restaurants, shops, parks, historical landmarks, architectural variety, view corridors, cultural diverseness and human-scaled connectivity.

The distance from downtown to Fisherman's Wharf is only 1½ miles. Columbus Avenue is 1 mile long. Washington Square is 1 mile from the Powell BART/Metro Station. Chinatown is half a mile from Market Street. These short distances are perfect for pedestrians, bicycling and surface transit — ingredients for a Mediterranean village-like realm.

SAN FRANCISCO'S TRANSPORTATION MODAL SPLITS

San Francisco's modal trip shares are 24 percent by walking, 20 percent by transit, 3 percent by bicycle and 53 percent by automobile. Though the compact northeast quadrant has higher pedestrian/ transit trip shares, an integrated street and transit system is needed to upgrade the entire city. By good urban design, some European cities have set worthy and achievable modal goals. Paris has 52 percent walking for all trips. Zurich has 65 percent transit for work trips. Copenhagen has 26 percent bicycling for work trips.

NEED FOR LONG-TERM VISION

The city's Columbus Avenue Neighborhood Transportation Study (CANTS) and Transportation



PHOTO: WWW.GAZETTE.NET

Effectiveness Project (TEP) are uncoordinated and insufficiently visionary. Short-term projects should incrementally build a long-term vision for the ultimate Columbus Boulevard. The Columbus Avenue diagonal is inherently multimodal and calls for a holistic transit/pedestrian/bicycle/car integration.

Instead, at the south end of Columbus Avenue, CANTS calls for single traffic lanes in each direction — a logjam. Traffic jams occur at rush hour, tourist season, July 4th, Fleet Week, Columbus Day, Chinese New Year, waterfront events, festivals, mishaps and happenstance.


Single traffic lanes are inconsistent with TEP's new bus line on Columbus to Montgomery/Clay streets. CANTS has minimal sidewalk widening — prolonging pedestrian bottlenecks. CANTS has minimal transit-only lanes — just a few blocks. Lastly, CANTS obfuscates clarity with new one-way streets and forced traffic turns — when simplicity and elegance suffice.

What is the essence of Columbus Avenue? How can competing modal shares be integrated?

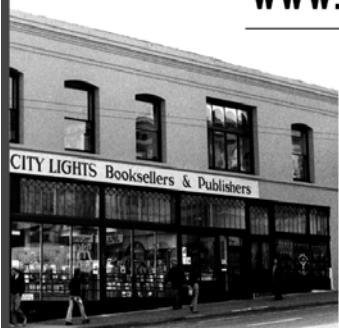
COLUMBUS AVENUE: A TRANSIT SPINE

Columbus Avenue needs to be a premier transit corridor — with robust bus lines and transit-only lanes

continued on page 4

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WE DID IT!

COIT TOWER REOPENS WITH MURALS RESTORED

NOW LET'S MAKE SURE THEY STAY THAT WAY!

COIT TOWER NEWS – MAY 2014

By Jon Golinger

Two years after San Francisco voters approved the Coit Tower preservation ballot measure, Proposition B in 2012, Coit Tower has been rehabilitated, the historic murals restored and new education and damage-prevention measures put in place. It was a gloriously beautiful day in San Francisco on May 14, and nowhere more so than on top of Telegraph Hill standing next to Lillie Hitchcock Coit's gift to "the city I have always loved."

Along with Donna "Lillie Coit" Huggins, Mal Sharp's Big Money in Jazz Band, the fire and police chiefs and assorted city officials, a beaming group of relatives of the Coit Tower artists joined supporters from across San Francisco to celebrate this long-awaited day. Special thanks to the artists' relatives, who urged voters to approve the preservation ballot measure and made special trips to be here for the grand reopening: Bruce Chesse (son of painter Ralph Chesse), Pete Arnautoff (grandson of artist Victor Arnautoff), Jayne Oldfield Blatchly, Ellen Fortier and Rachel Prescott (daughter and granddaughters of artist Otis Oldfield), and Ruth and Adam Gottstein (daughter and grandson of artist Bernard Zakheim).

On the eve of the tower's reopening, Carl Nolte of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote a fascinating front-page feature story about Otis Oldfield and Jayne Oldfield Blatchly, the "keeper of the flame" of Oldfield's art. The story reads as a wonderful window into life on Telegraph Hill in the 1930s when Oldfield and his family lived on unpaved Montgomery Street and he painted his Coit Tower art. Click on this link to read the story online and see some fabulous photos of Otis and Jayne.

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/1930s-Telegraph-Hill-A-slum-rich-in-art-5472737.php>

Special thanks also to Harvey Smith of the



Maxine Albro's restored mural *California*.

National New Deal Preservation Association and to the San Francisco Arts Commission for their collaboration in creating the new set of artist informational plaques that tell visitors who each Coit Tower artist was and provide some context for their art.

Watch this terrific ABC News story about the grand reopening of Coit Tower by clicking here: <http://abc7news.com/travel/coit-tower-reopened-after-6-months-of-repairs/60425/>

www.ProtectCoitTower.org

Photos from the restored Coit Tower reopening, May 14, 2014

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF RICHARD ZIMMERMAN
WWW.REZPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



Jon Golinger & Donna "Lillie Coit" Huggins.

(Left to right) Pete Arnautoff, Jon Golinger, Ruth Gottstein, Bruce Chesse, and Julie Jaycox.



Columbus Avenue Planning *continued from page 3*

for its entire length. Transit-only lanes can have flex-use for cars at peak hours. Bus lines 8X, 11 (former 15) and 41 should be restored to full service, reviving connectivity to the Montgomery and Embarcadero stations. All 15 of the northeast quadrant's bus/streetcar/cablecar lines should be prioritized for service upgrades — much cheaper and quicker than an expensive subway.

Since 2006, Muni has cut service, eliminated six bus lines, shortened 22 routes, deferred maintenance, had increases in missed runs/switchbacks/late buses, raised fares/fees/fines/meters. The Central Subway's Phase 1 (T-Line) eliminated the 15-Third Street and 20-Columbus lines and cut hours for the 41-Union line, cutting service to the Montgomery and Embarcadero stations. The 10-Townsend and 12-Folsom routes were shortened. The Central Subway's Phase 2 will cut 34,000-to-76,000 hours per year from the 8X, 30 and 45 lines. Phase 2 also eliminates the T-Line's Embarcadero loop to Market Street's BART/Metro stations and the Transbay Terminal.

COLUMBUS AVENUE: A PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SPINE

With its Mediterranean-scale, geographic beauty and topographic character, San Francisco's northeast quadrant is a natural pedestrian realm. The streams of tourists on Columbus Avenue are validation for wider sidewalks, landscaping, beautification and bicycle lanes along its entire length.

COLUMBUS AVENUE: A TRAFFIC SPINE

This grand diagonal road, linking major destinations, is an irreplaceable traffic corridor. Traffic volumes require sufficient lanes, traffic signal synchronization, intersection controls, regional harmonization with Montgomery Street/Embarcadero stations...

THE VARIABLE: PARKING MANAGEMENT AND STREET PARKING

First, there should be no net loss of neighborhood parking — perhaps even increased parking. But

to achieve Columbus Avenue's ultimate vision of wide pedestrian sidewalks, transit-only lanes, bicycle lanes and traffic lanes, parking needs to be relocated from Columbus Avenue — such as in many great boulevards around the world. A district-wide parking management plan must re-examine street parking, passenger zones, taxi/valet zones, delivery zones, parking lots, public/private garages, car-sharing, shuttle buses, free transit,

robotic parking, public/private funding mechanisms...

Columbus Avenue's near-term projects must add up to a grand vision — because funding is scarce and greatness shouldn't be limited by the lack of imagination.



"Everything you can imagine is real."

— Pablo Picasso

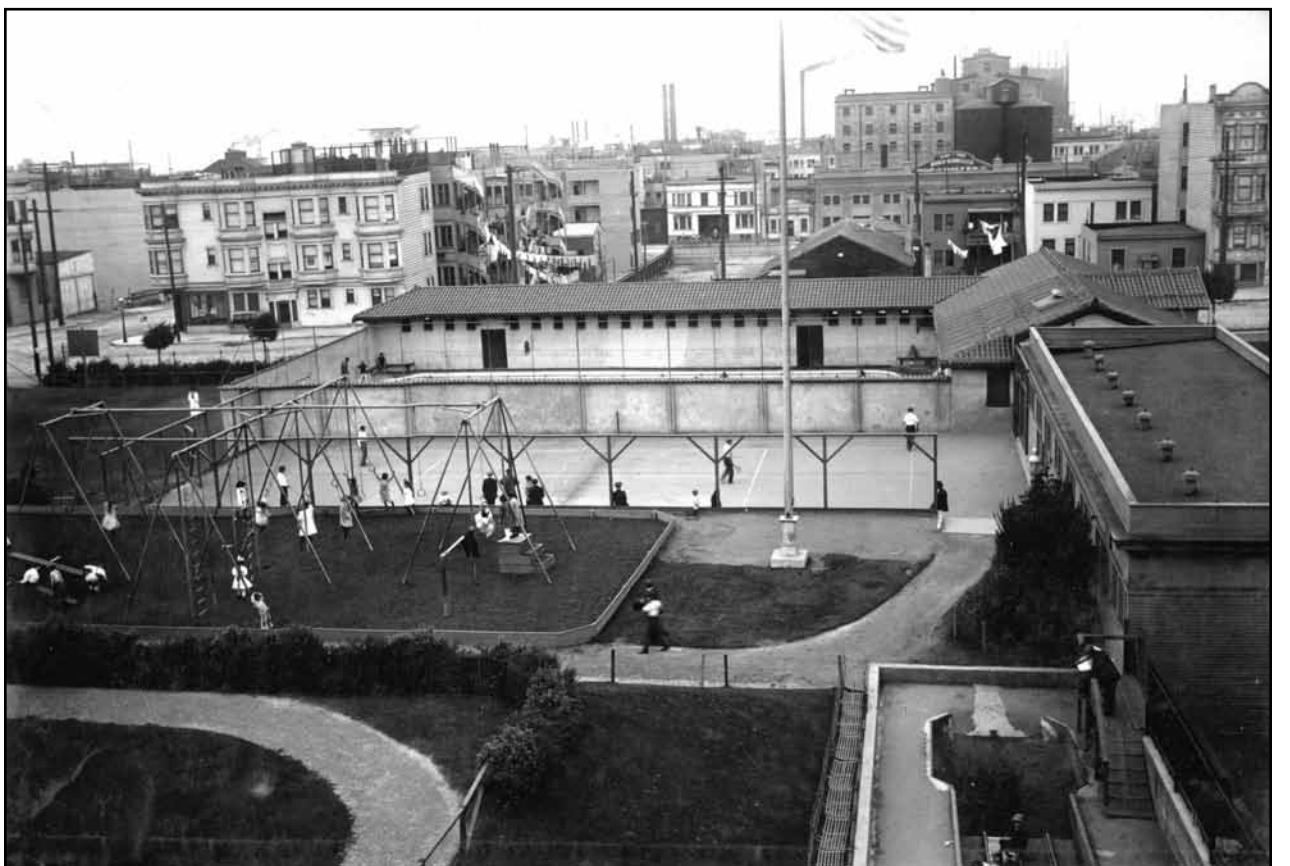
NORTH BEACH JOE DIMAGGIO PLAYGROUND

By Julianne Christensen

The North Beach Joe DiMaggio Playground, evolved, in a pretty direct way, from the Settlement House movement in Boston and other major cities that sought to mitigate pollution and filth, cramped living quarters and rampant tuberculosis that plagued urban workers and their children in the late 1800s. Elizabeth Ashe and Alice Griffith founded what would become the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center in 1880 to help fight illness, illiteracy and poor conditions in North Beach. They lobbied hard for better recreation opportunities for neighborhood children. So, when San Francisco finally appointed a Playground Commission in 1907, North Beach was selected as one of the first two neighborhoods to get a playground. (The other, at Seventh and Harrison streets, no longer exists.)

Pre-earthquake San Francisco had parks. Most were adult “pleasure grounds” made for strolling or sitting, or parks that provided amusements for more affluent families. The idea of providing recreational activities for ordinary, even underprivileged kids, was radical and new. North Beach’s park plans included a swimming pool, perhaps the first publicly financed public pool in the city.

Tight funding spurred still another novelty: The city financed the pool by diverting funds from a Fire Department cistern planned for Powell and Lombard streets. The failure of the city’s water system during the great fire that followed the 1906 earthquake had resulted in plans for a series of water tanks under city



North Beach Playground in the 1930s.

ACQUIRED FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY ROOM, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

The retaining walls that circle the park appear to be part of the original 1910 construction. There was a giant two-story slide early on and lots of big swings. Three of the nine DiMaggio kids that became professional base-

ball players, Dom, Joe and Vince, grew up playing there in the 1920s. Telegraph Hill Dweller Dorothy Erskine, who nearly single-handedly caused the adoption of the neighborhood’s 40-foot height limit and went on to found the Greenbelt Alliance and aid in the development of Save the Bay and the Point Reyes National Seashore, led the project that planted the sycamores around the park in the 1950s.

The last big changes to the park came in the 1950s. The pool was enclosed and the old wooden clubhouse was wrapped in a cocoon of ’50s tile. Then-Mayor George Christopher was convinced that \$56,000 was too much to pay for the triangle lot at Columbus, Lombard and Mason, so the North Beach Branch Library was squeezed into the southwest corner of the park, in an area where Italian families used to have Saturday night group dinners, nestling from the wind against the 13-foot-

high retaining walls. The park was named for Joe DiMaggio in 1981, but everyone forgot and fought to change it again years later, led by Mayor Gavin Newsom, a ballplayer.

Now the Joe DiMaggio Playground, at 105 years old, is getting a makeover. Construction, scheduled to start in early 2015 and last about 12 months, will reconfigure the park. The children’s play areas will move to the center of the park, to run in a band alongside the pool. There will be new tennis courts along the Greenwich Street side of the park. The bocce courts will pivot and be joined by a small olive grove to shade the picnic tables there. The number of basketball hoops will double. More than 50 trees and lots of planted areas will be added, with more places to sit and more shade. A big change will be the opening of the park so that it connects directly with the new library. Mason Green will be altered, along with the western edge of the park, to create a more green and unified space. It will seamlessly connect the library, pool and clubhouse with an attractive outdoor recreation space to create a wonderful community facility at the heart of our neighborhood.

We have 92 percent of the funding needed to build the new park. Friends of Joe DiMaggio Playground is partnering with other neighborhood groups to help raise \$300,000 needed to make sure the playground can be used by neighbors of all ages, and is ready for the next 100 years. These funds will provide the finishing touches that make the park really lovely and special. Donor tiles will ring the park seat wall and we’d love to see your family’s or business’s name there. For more information or to donate, please go to [ttp://www.DiMaggioPlayground.org](http://www.DiMaggioPlayground.org).

See you at the groundbreaking!



The North Beach Playground at Greenwich and Mason streets as it appeared in the 1950s prior to the construction of the library.

COURTESY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY ROOM, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

streets. (You can still see the telltale circle of bricks that mark their locations at some intersections.) It was reasoned that, with the swimming pool, the water would still be there for fighting fires, but the kids could enjoy it in the meantime. Perhaps it was the decorum of the age, or that the Hill’s boys had a reputation for being particularly rowdy, but two narrow, outdoor pools were constructed side-by-side, one for girls and one for boys. (Neighbors elected to keep that configuration when the pool was renovated in 2006.)



Plan for the Joe DiMaggio Playground.

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Conceptual rendering of play area.

BOTH DRAWINGS COURTESY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO RECREATION & PARKS DEPARTMENT

MILLE GRAZIE, IOLANDA . . .

By Andy Katz

On March 30, many old-timers as well as some new visitors gathered at Caffè Trieste, North Beach's 58-year-old institution at the corner of Grant Avenue and Vallejo Street, to pay their final respects and share stories about Iolanda Bodi, who passed away on March 4.

As Ken Garcia wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1999, Iolanda was "the heart and soul of Caffè Trieste, North Beach's unofficial den mother and the maternal overseer of adults and children who have grown up under and over her well-worn counter during the past 27 years. To say that Iolanda knows how to run an Italian cafe is like saying that Francis Ford Coppola knows his way around a movie set — a fitting image, because a fair portion of the script for 'The Godfather' was penned by young Francis at a coffee table inside Trieste's weathered walls."



Iolanda retired and returned to her native Italy at the age of 71 in 1999. To many regulars of Caffè Trieste, including yours truly, her spirit lingers on. I can still hear her call out "Chi" to her customers. She remembered everyone's order, and after my mother, Nancy Katz, passed away in 1994, Iolanda shared with me how much she missed her and wanted to know how I was faring. Nancy had been a regular at Caffè Trieste since it opened in 1956. Iolanda cared. We, the customers, were truly like family to her!

At the March 30th remembrance for Iolanda, Jack Hirschman, San Francisco's former poet laureate, read the following tribute, which he had penned: "The Iolanda Bodi Arcane." Beautiful words for a beautiful soul. We will never forget you, Iolanda.



"THE IOLANDA BODI ARCANÉ"

*In memory of Iolanda Bodi
Dec. 16, 1927 – March 4, 2014*

1.

So here we are again:
Iolanda,
Iolanda Bodi,
the body of a soul and spirit
that's really impossible
to say goodbye to here.

Maybe on Green Street,
one might pause walking
and thinking of her
and say, 'Ah, yes, Iolanda.
She used to work around here,
then went back to Italy,
didn't she?'

Or on a bench in the park
on a rainy spring day
one might fleetingly
recall her in conversation
with a friend after hearing
she now is gone.

But from here in the Caffè Trieste?
Never!
From here she's never left,
she's part and parcel —
I mean, how can I explain
to young Joe, who's at

the espresso machine,
that his pleasant disposition,
or Ernie's generosity, or
Paul's gaffs or Ida's
intensity and humor
have been conditioned by
the air and atmosphere
of Iolanda Bodi
though they were all kids or teens
when she worked here.

2.

When news arrived from
Monfalcone, Italy,
that she'd died early this month,
the mosaics on the tables
Tony Santiago made
— a North Beach-born Puerto Rican
whom she loved and joins,

along with her husband Francesco — wept.
As did the jukebox that automatically
played her favorite aria, sung by
the entire Giotta family, for song
is the way of Being in this space most of all.

3.

For me, all those poems
of Rocco Scotellaro and Santo Cali
I translated from Italian
under the wings of her proud
and protective gaze,
all those poems I translated from
and then wrote in Russian

day after day
all the years long, and always
her 'Giacomo!' or 'Hi, Dali!'
or 'Cici' this or 'Cici' that
whom I called
my Anna Magnani seconda
because if anyone in 42 years
of coming to this place,
if anyone was mythic
in the way she greeted
your person, lifted and
embraced infant children
as though they belonged to her,
mythically
really
like Anna Magnani in 'Open City,'
a woman who always showed you
her beginning as
a timeless here and now
of affection, friendliness and respect
(but woe if your respect wasn't mutual!).

She worked life,
she charged life
she laughed with it
and yelled at it

and ran you out if you
were just sitting
— not writing or drawing —
and there wasn't a coffee
in front of you.

She was my mother

for the first six penniless
months I came here,
giving me a croissant
and a double espresso
everyday, which warmed
me to write and translate.

It was a gleam we shared,
it was in our eyes, at the
corners of our smiles,
it was a love of the other's
Being. I carry that gleam
every time I enter this
place. It's Iolanda
taking them all on:
the dopey surrealist trots,
the alley-cat beatniks she
knew by heart, (though
her's was always for
the workers first of all).

Who can ever forget
her big-hearted voice
or those arms that,
around you, made you
feel the world was
actually alive.

Iolanda,
Iolanda Bodi, the body of
the soul and spirit of
the song of this
Caffè Trieste.

IN MEMORIAM

Ruby Gim, manager of the Tel-Hi Senior Program, passed away on April 30. She was considered family at Tel-Hi and will be remembered for her bright spirit, warm smile and generous heart. Tel-Hi held two memorial events for Ruby on Wednesday, May 28, one for the senior community and the second for the entire community.

Many came to honor our dear friend.

Lorenzo Petroni, owner of North Beach Restaurant and Petroni Vineyards, passed away on May 27 after a battle with esophageal cancer. A rosary service was held at Saints Peter and Paul Church on June 2 with a funeral Mass on June 3.

The North Beach community will miss him.

Fog Hill Market

Hanna Chedyak

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HELP THE 'HOOD *Shop Locally*

HAPPY BYPRODUCT OF A SEMINAL NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY: SOME GOOD STORIES

By Art Peterson

The purpose of Michael R. Corbett’s exhaustive tome, *“North Beach, San Francisco Historical Context Statement,”* is to “provide an updated historic context for evaluating historic resources” in our neighborhood. It will be “submitted to the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission to further guide the evaluation of historic resources subject to project review and in other planning and preservation efforts.” But you don’t have to be a city commissioner to learn some interesting stuff about North Beach from Corbett’s work. Here are some tidbits on which historian Corbett has brought me up to speed.

It Wasn’t All Bad

Though North Beach was all but leveled in the earthquake and fire of 1906, the devastation had a comparative upside. The destruction of the wood buildings that dominated the neighborhood left little to clean up but ashes. So reconstruction could proceed posthaste. By contrast, downtown required months of hauling away bricks, iron and stone before new construction could proceed. Add to this the head-start financing by A.P. Giannini’s Bank of Italy and a neighborhood workforce of skilled laborers and the new North Beach was off and running.

Isn’t It Romantic?

The conventional wisdom has it that North Beach, until a few decades ago, had been predominantly Italian. Not quite true. In the 1880s and 1890s, the neighborhood filled with increasing numbers of Spanish, Mexicans, French, Portuguese, Swiss, Peruvians, Chileans and Basques, as well as Italians. What these different nationalities had in common was that they all spoke Romance, Latin-based languages. That’s why the neighborhood then was known as the Latin Quarter.

Kiss Me, I’m Calabrian

Observers of North Beach immigration in the early days didn’t talk about Italy. Indeed, Italy didn’t become a nation until 1870. Instead, those who relocated from the Italian peninsula identified by region. They were from Liguria, Tuscany, Calabria and Sicily. The newly arrived lived in enclaves with others from their place of origin, who spoke their dialect. They married, worked and socialized predominantly with others from their region. As far as Ligurians were concerned, Tuscans were from a galaxy far, far away.

Serving the Neighborhood

A persistent hue and cry from neighborhood organizations has been that there are not enough businesses serving the people who live here. “Why can’t we have a decent hardware store?” is the continuing complaint. Some wonder if it has always been this way. Michael Corbett would say, “No.” He documents, for instance, that local businesses around 1921 not only sold goods, but in many cases, produced and stored their products. There were tin shops, blacksmiths, laundries, plumbers, carpenters, upholsterers, paint dealers, bicycle-repair shops, machine shops, electrical-supply stores, feed mills, undertakers, a crematory, an accordion factory, coal and wood dealers, ravioli, macaroni, sausage and candy factories. “Formula Retail?” Not a problem.

Hyde Park Far West

If the tranquility of the corner of Grant and Green



A devastated North Beach, post-1906 earthquake and fire. COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION



The Cuneo flats at Bay and Leavenworth streets around 1904. THE J.B. MONACO COLLECTION, COURTESY OF RICHARD MONACO, SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

these days is imposed on by the late-night reverberations of a high-voltage guitar, residents in early decades of the 20th century were set upon by another kind of disturbance. The intersection served as a free-speech corner. Neighbors on their way to Sunday morning services at Saints Peter and Paul’s complained to the police about being obliged to pass the corner where a soap box provided an outlet for the radical orators of the day. In one instance, “Phillip Perrone spoke disparagingly about the American flag, condemned law and order, denounced all forms of government and ended with a tirade against the pope.” And that was before Cafe Trieste.

Ticky Tacky We’re Not

We like to think that as North Beach dwellers we do not live in little boxes all the same, but take a look around and you’ll see that, however elegant the residences that fill the neighborhood may be, they have more similarities than differences. Mostly built between 1906 and 1915, rising from the ashes of the 1906 devastation, the structures, mostly flats, are just about all two- and three-story wood houses built on modest budgets and extending to the property lines in front and to the sides. On the main streets, the buildings have bay windows. In the alleys, they have flat fronts as overhangs in these locations were against the law. A variety of classically inspired ornamentation adds a dash of surprise to many structures, but in general a dwelling in North Beach is as recognizable as one in Daly City — only a lot classier.

Who Needs Napa?

The underbelly of these structures often had a high basement that Italian inhabitants put to a more elemental use than as a place to store unused skis and Black and Decker tools. Every Italian family made wine in the grape season, August, September and October. Everyone had a wine cellar. Families bought grapes from railroad cars that came by ferry from the North Bay to the Embarcadero. A typical family used about one ton of grapes. One commentator remarked that during the wine-making season the sidewalks were slippery with grapes and a fruity aroma filled the air.

Wherefore Art Thou?

All over North Beach one finds “Romeo” flats, which residents cherish as charming period-piece dwellings. A Romeo flat is a two- or three-story building with two bays of flats separated by an open central stairway with balcony landings between the floors overlooking the street, evoking some romantic image of Verona’s amorous couple.

Romantic as these building may seem today, when they were constructed they drew the scorn of housing advocates such as Tel-Hi founder Alice Griffith, who, according to Corbett, “thought everyone should live in a home with a garden in front



Plans for a three-floor “Romeo” flats building (Six flats), 471-74 Vallejo St. Original blueprints by Charles Fantoni, 1907. COURTESY OF THE NORTHEAST SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVANCY, TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS ARCHIVE

and a backyard.” Griffith saw the Romeos as containing “dark rooms lacking, in some instances, even a window into an unventilated airshaft ... breeding disease and sin.” Griffith’s campaign, however, never got out of the starting gate. According to Richard Dillon, “The residents were content with their low rents and with quarters that, in comparison with those in Italy, were comfortable indeed.”

Michael Corbett’s study may be obtained by contacting the Northeast San Francisco Conservancy, 470 Columbus Ave., Suite 211, San Francisco, CA 94133-3930

Art Peterson’s book, *“Why Is That Bridge Orange, San Francisco for the Curious,”* available at local bookstores and from *Amazon.com*, is now in its second printing.



View of Kearny Street from Telegraph Hill, 1906. COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

NORTH BEACH LEGACY BARS & RESTAURANTS

By Catherine Accardi

San Francisco has, and always will, undergo dynamic cultural change, evolving from a hamlet named Yerba Buena to one of the world's most beloved cities. Who could disagree with that? Dramatic change, cultural diversity and unparalleled exuberance are characteristics of San Francisco's decades-old culinary establishments.

In 2012, San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, a nonprofit, membership-supported organization, embarked on an "educational initiative that invites users to experience the history of some of San Francisco's most legendary eateries, watering holes, dives and haunts." Established in 1971, Heritage's mission was to preserve and enhance the city's unique architectural and cultural identity. To that end, a series of community discussions took place among city officials and neighborhood representatives intent on protecting historic businesses deemed embodiments of intangible, yet significant, cultural values. Thus was born the Legacy Project, conceived amid threats to local institutions such as the Tonga Room and Tosca Café. The outcome was a catalog titled "San Francisco's Legacy Bars & Restaurants."

Thus far, more than 140 businesses have been placed on the list of iconic establishments. On June 2, San Francisco Heritage proudly unveiled the final "official" round of inductees. In addition to recognizing the most recent inductees, Heritage introduced a **pocket guide** to all 100 "Legacy Bars & Restaurants." The fold-out map will be available for free at participating legacy establishments.

So, which establishments make the grade and why? The selection criteria includes businesses that have achieved longevity of 40 years or more, possess distinctive architecture or interior design, and/or contribute to a sense of history in the surrounding neighborhood. Twenty-two of these businesses are located in North Beach.

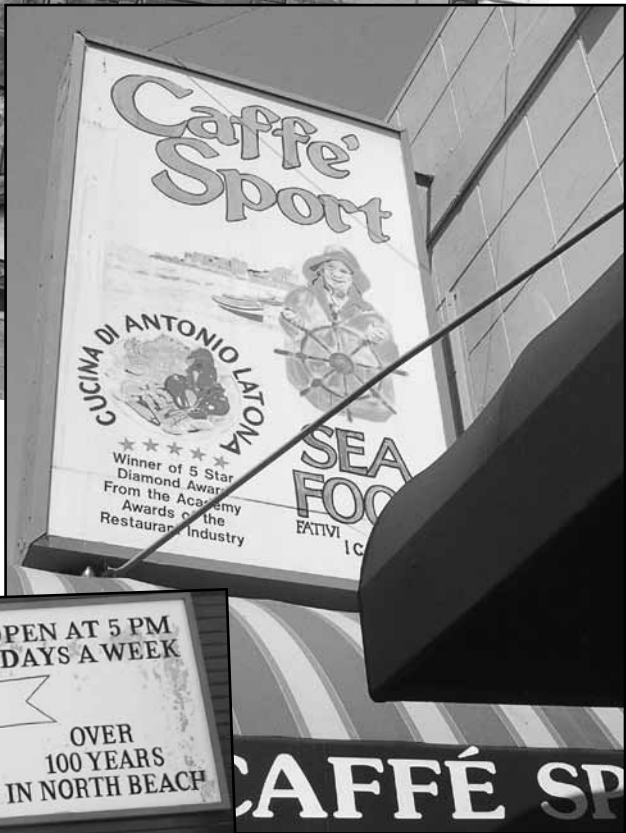
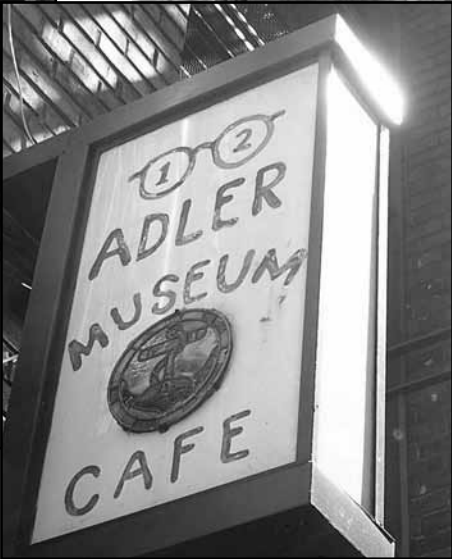
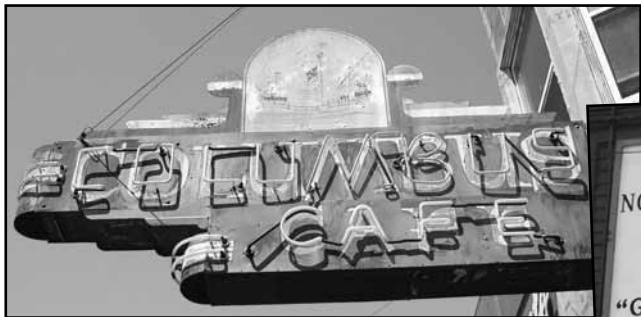
As a native San Franciscan, born and raised in North Beach, I can identify many eateries that could, and *should*, be on this list and, hopefully, will be as more establishments are considered for inclusion. Listed below are the legacy bars and restaurants in North Beach. The complete list of San Francisco's legacy bars and restaurants is available for viewing at www.sfheritage.org/legacy/#.

NORTH BEACH LEGACY BARS & RESTAURANTS

- Bimbo's 365 Club** — 1025 Columbus Ave. (1931)
- Café Sport** — 574 Green St. (1969)
- Caffe Trieste** — 601 Vallejo St. (1956)
- Capp's Corner** — 1600 Powell St. (1963)
- Columbus Café** — 562 Green St. (1936)
- Fior d'Italia** — 2237 Mason St. (1886)
- Gino & Carlo's** — 548 Green St. (1942)
- La Rocca's Corner** — 957 Columbus Ave. (1930s)

- Liguria Bakery** — 1700 Stockton St. (1911)
- Mario's Bohemian Cigar Store Café** — 566 Columbus Ave. (1920s)
- Mr. Bing's** — 201 Columbus Ave. (1967)
- Original Joe's** — 601 Union St. (1937)
- Original U.S. Restaurant** — 515 Columbus Ave. (1970s)
- Pier 23 Café** — Pier 23 (1937)
- Savoy Tivoli** — 1434 Grant Ave. (1907)
- Sam's Pizza** — 618 Broadway (1966)
- Spec's Twelve Adler Museum Café** — 12 Saroyan Pl. (1968)
- The Saloon** — 1232 Grant Ave. (1861)
- Tommaso's** — 1042 Kearny St. (1935)
- Tony Nik's** — 1534 Stockton St. (1933)
- Tosca Café** — 242 Columbus Ave. (1920)
- Vesuvio Café** — 255 Columbus Ave. (1948)

Catherine Accardi is the editor of *The Semaphore*. She is also a San Francisco historian and author of two history books, "San Francisco's North Beach & Telegraph Hill" and "Images of America - San Francisco Landmarks." These titles are available at most book stores and online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. You may contact Catherine at caacat@comcast.net.



THE WILD HEART OF TELEGRAPH HILL

By Judy Irving
Co-Chair, Parks, Trees & Birds Committee

If you have a wildlife problem, call WildCare San Rafael's "Living with Wildlife" Hotline: 415-456-SAVE (7283)

RATS: I didn't see this, but I've heard about it from reliable witnesses, including my god-daughter Hannah, who happened to be sitting on a bench with a friend in Washington Square late one night: The entire grassy center of the square seemed to be undulating. It was so dark that they couldn't figure out what they were seeing until something scurried at their feet. *Rats!* Thousands of rats! An enormous, solid, quivering blanket of rats! Word has it that these creatures, fearing the noise and vibrations caused by the Central Subway boring machines, have been racing from their usual hidey-holes to the square to get away. Lots of us go there to get away, too, but this is one for the books.

RACCOONS: As I mentioned in an earlier column, we have a bird bath that raccoons like to use for hand washing. They also like to shove the rocks around, tip the saucers over and pull the hose off the pump. Now they've taken it a step further: Lately, one has been meticulously prying the pump apart — an operation that I can only do with a knife — presumably to see and enjoy the sight of the little pump blades spinning inside. The raccoons have been visiting Mary Lipian's place, too. Dennis Hearne caught a great portrait of one on a street corner. Raccoons are part of the night-owl population that takes over while we sleep. Tim Ferris tells this story: "We did have several nocturnal visits by

continued on page 10



Raccoon takes an evening stroll on a San Francisco street.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DENNIS HEARNE



PARKS, TREES & BIRDS REPORT



By Carlo Arreglo
Co-chair, Parks, Trees, & Birds Committee

In April, the Golden Gate Audubon Society held its annual Birdathon, which put the "fun" in fundraiser with quirky bird-related challenges such as a Cal vs. Stanford Big Game of bird watching that sought which campus reigned supreme in bird sightings, or a search for the majestic California Condor at Pinnacles National Park. Closer to home, yet no less ambitious, was a challenge for Telegraph Hill, North Beach, downtown and the waterfront: 40 bird species! In this dense urban environment, could we possibly find 40 species?

A small but intrepid crew — ranging from a crack photographer to a U.S. Geological Survey biologist to a Hill Dweller birding enthusiast and others — set out from Pioneer Park and Coit Tower and quickly racked up common species: Dark-eyed Junco, California Towhee, American Robin, American Crow

and House Finch. Not bad, not bad. Fox Sparrow and Golden-crowned Sparrows were nice pickups, but expected. Yellow-rumped Warbler. Good. *WHAT?!* Hermit Warbler! Nice! This was a lifer for a couple of people. That is, a bird that they saw for the first time. This was good because we hadn't yet moved down the Filbert Steps, but we were picking up some good migrants looking up at the trees in Pioneer Park. We checked out some sparrows and then, *WHAT?!* That one's a White-throated Sparrow, another good find! We picked up a few other species and then made our way to the waterfront, confident that 40 species was doable.

Alas, the waterfront was a disaster. Aside from an Eared Grebe and a Clark's Grebe, only the usual suspects were found. The Belted Kingfisher that I had seen just a few days before was not around and only Western Gulls loitered about. We were stuck at 30 or so and needed 10 species by 11 a.m. to reach our goal. Fortunately, we had Sydney Walton Square and Sue Bierman Park ahead of us, birding hotspots that have yielded goodies such as the

Yellow-throated Warbler, Palm Warbler and Lucy's Warbler. The team picked up a Townsend's Warbler, a Red-tailed Hawk, a Turkey Vulture and a Peregrine Falcon. Only two more to go to reach 40!

But that was it. Thirty-eight was the number we got. Still, it was a great time for a great cause benefitting children's programs on eco-education and supporting habitat restoration in the city, including at Heron's Head and Pier 94. Our team exceeded our fundraising challenge and we showed that even in a dense urban setting rife with habitat fragmentation, development and privatization, birds and nature — with our simultaneous destructive and constructive interventions — find a way.

If you'd like to join me on a bird walk in the 'hood, check the Golden Gate Audubon Society website. I lead beginner bird walks on Telegraph Hill once a month.

<http://www.goldengateaudubon.org/field-trips/fieldtrips/> Or contact me at arregloc@gmail.com



Birdathon challenge crew

PHOTOGRAPH BY JON SIEKER



White-throated Sparrow

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM CHAN

ROSY PLAYS CAMILLE

Laughter on the Hill

By Margaret Parton
(Excerpted and edited by William Pates)

We are continuing the adventures of Margaret Parton, whose 1945 memoir, “Laughter on the Hill,” is a North Beach classic. In this episode, interesting adventures on the Hill continue.

It was autumn now in San Francisco, and winemaking time on the Hill. As I walked down Union Street toward the streetcar, I could smell the purple grapes hanging rich and heavy in the hidden arbors behind the bare white fronts of the Italian flats. Great wooden barrels, scoured for the wine to come, began to appear in front of every doorstep, and one day there was the stained old wine press starting its yearly journey from the houses at the top of the Hill down to the late harvesters at the bottom. Each day as I passed it would be moved a little farther down, its heady smell mingling with the warm air from the basement bakeries, the odors of Provolone, salami and black olives from the dim Italian groceries, the acid reek of the dark, male-frequented alleys, the salt wind from the Pacific.

On another great arbor, miles eastward, other grapes were ripening, and the yellow leaves of the maple tree were covering the roof of our farmhouse. Mother and Dad, worrying over my job, nostalgic for a united family, issued a homing call.

Thinking about life in New York compared with life in San Francisco, I wrote them a stream of consciousness letter: “I hate sixth avenue and loew’s sheridan and white tower hamburger stands and gin and pineapple juice and subways and buses and eighth street and the george washington bridge. I hate café society and hypochondriacs and spinsters and birds eye food and war talk and going up in elevators and coming down in elevators and the prometheus in radio city. I obscenity on them all.

“But I love the Italian grocery where I buy danish squash and the fog and the ships loading cargo and the cineraria which has just bloomed in my garden and sitting up half the night with pete and charles playing bach and carol with her malicious tongue and crimson dresses and flower stands on the downtown streets and the untended newspaper stands too where they trust you to leave a nickel and my crazy roommate lucille and the outline of tamalpais across the bay and the feeling I always have no matter what terrible things happen, everywhere, all the time, that I am happy and gay and healthy and young...”

The day before Halloween I asked get off early the next day, because Lucille and I were giving a party. Mr. Wallingford, who by this time was practically eating out of my hand, said certainly, and looked wistful. Would I allow him to send up a case of champagne? I said no, thank you, we were having a barrel of beer. He said, how delightfully Bohemian.

He said I probably had some very interesting friends. I said yes, they were nice people. He said he’d like to meet them some time. When I remained silent he couldn’t stand it any more. “May I come to your party?” he asked.

So he was invited to the party. When I called up the expected guests and told them they were to meet my satyr at last, they were delighted -- all except Pete.

“I don’t approve of that guy,” he glowered.

Pete came to the Halloween party reluctantly, but a lot of other people came to see Mr. Wallingford. There was Bob Reed, a minute and lyrical young poet, stagnating as a seaman, first-class. There was Vicki, the painter who lived just over the Hill top, and her roommate Paulie, a blond and hearty wench who didn’t like me, but who came anyway; Val Bleeker, the good soul who gave such fine parties next door; Charles, in a terrible mood of wild gaiety; Bert, a handsome Carmel product who couldn’t decide whether to study medicine or anthro-

pology and who had almost reached 30 without making up his mind; Lucille, of course, and Lenore, the pretty Marin County deb who sometimes stayed at the shack when she wanted to get away from it all.

Everything went beautifully until Rosy was it during charades. Bert whispered a phrase which Rosy had to act out to all of us, without using any words. Nodding his comprehension, he trotted back to the center of the room and laboriously let himself down to the floor, leaning on one good arm. The other, which he had bruised when he fell on his telephone, was in a Sulka-scarf sling. For five minutes he lay flat on the Chinese matting, writhing and flailing his yellow claws above his head. We kept suggesting he try something else, but he just shook his head and continued to writhe. When it got too unbearable, we all gave up.

“The death of Camille,” he said.

In the evening, when I could get away, life resumed its pleasant character, fantastic and somehow dreamlike. As always, we picnicked on the slopes of Tamalpais, danced, talked about people and places, drank wine.

It was not always pleasant. One evening, when Pete was away, I went with Charles and Vicky up to the boys’ rooftop flat, to watch an eclipse of the moon. Charles and Vicky were supposed to be in love, but something was wrong. A girl we knew only slightly dropped in, got drunk with Charles, and disappeared with him into the bedroom. Vicky and I sat in the brightly lighted kitchen... She finished the bottle of gin, I pulled the petals off a wilting carnation and the springs creaked in the next room.

“Fantastic, absolutely fantastic,” Vicky kept muttering.

“What is?”

“These Californians... they have sold their shadows to the devil... They have no souls...”

The bottle was empty, and I took her home.

The Wild Heart of Telegraph Hill continued from page 9

insouciant raccoons a couple of months ago. We were awakened on several nights by our dog’s barking at the intruders two stories below. I hired a trapper from down the peninsula. His trap caught a young raccoon the first or second night. When he informed us that the raccoon would be killed rather than released, however, we changed our minds and let the little creature go. Lately, we’ve had less evidence of their visitations.”

MOCKINGBIRDS: When I was working on the “Wild Parrots” movie, someone complained to Mark about a parrot that was “Singing all night, driving me



Raccoon visitor

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARY LIPIAN



Mockingbird

PHOTOGRAPH BY JUDY IRVING

crazy.” Parrots go to sleep when the sun sets, however, like most birds. The only bird around here that sings all night is a lone male mockingbird, calling for a mate. We used to have a pair on the Greenwich Steps, many years ago, and we’ve been missing that zaniness. Then, last week, we heard another lone male, warbling, squeaking, making guttural sounds and singing melodious phrases. It’s breeding season now, and its mission is urgent. Mockingbirds (medium-size, gray above, pale below, with white wing patches) have a large repertoire of songs that imitate other birds, dog barks, gate squeaks,

whistles, machinery and so on. They can live to age 14 and learn new phrases throughout life. The other day, as I was walking up the Greenwich Steps, I heard a particularly loud, robust chickadee (“chick-a-dee-dee-dee”). When I checked, it was the mockingbird! We have high hopes it’ll find what its looking for and stay awhile.

WILD WINE: Coit Liquors at Union and Columbus, closed for 5 1/2 months, should be reopened by the time you read this. Support Shaddy! (He supports us.) Buy wine! Go wild!





WATERFRONT COMMITTEE REPORT

VOTERS FROM EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD IN SAN FRANCISCO
APPROVE WATERFRONT INITIATIVE



By Jon Golinger
Chair, Waterfront Committee

June 3 was a fantastic day for San Francisco's waterfront. Despite heavy opposition and last-minute dirty tricks, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition B, the Waterfront Height Limit Right to Vote Act, by 59-to-41 percent. The act is now a city ordinance, which ensures the existing maximum building height limits on the waterfront shall be preserved and not raised unless a height-limit increase is approved by city voters.

This big victory comes just months after voters overwhelmingly defeated a proposed waterfront-height increase for luxury condos at 8 Washington St. It's a rarity to see across-the-board support on such a hotly debated issue in this diverse city, but voters in every neighborhood agree that we should protect our spectacular waterfront for everyone to enjoy.

The Proposition B vote totals released by the San

Francisco Department of Elections reveal that the strong support for protecting waterfront height limits was citywide, with Prop. B winning in every neighborhood, overwhelmingly in both Assembly districts and strongly in all 11 supervisorial districts. This big win came despite efforts to undermine and defeat Prop. B by Mayor Ed Lee's appointees to the Port and Planning commissions, Supervisor Scott Wiener and the nearly \$200,000 spent by the Realtors' Association, Chamber of Commerce, construction unions and venture capitalist Ron Conway on a misleading negative campaign in the final weeks before election day.

Unfortunately, District 3 Supervisor David Chiu declined to sign the petition to put Prop. B on the ballot, failed to support it at the Democratic County Central Committee and repeatedly made arguments against it while campaigning for an Assembly seat. Chiu's position on Prop. B stuck out like a sore thumb because it contrasted with his very prominent position last

year working with us to oppose 8 Washington. Nevertheless, District 3 voters approved Prop. B with a resounding 62 percent in favor. We hope Chiu will explain his position on Prop. B and work with us to implement the ordinance.

We have much more work ahead to ensure that the Port Commission moves forward with sensible waterfront planning that engages the community and that they don't try to ignore the will of the voters. After all, the Port Commission continues to be run by the political appointees who unanimously supported 8 Washington and did everything they could to defeat Prop. B. The election results for 8 Washington and Prop. B show that we have unequivocal evidence that it's not just the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, a handful of activists, or the residents of a few waterfront neighborhoods who are standing up to protect our special waterfront – the people of every neighborhood in San Francisco are standing together.



SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE TO PERFORM FREE SHOW IN WASHINGTON SQUARE ON AUGUST 17TH

Skyrocketing rents. Loss of diversity. Evictions. Google Glass-wearing nouveau riche.

The war on the poor. What is the city coming to? The Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe opens its 55th season with "Ripple Effect," a musical-comedic tale of intersecting lives and cultures that reflect the familiar neighborhood tensions polarizing San Franciscans.

The Troupe will appear in Washington Square on Sunday, August 17th, with music at 1:30 p.m. and the performance following at 2 p.m. The show is free, but donations are encouraged to keep the Troupe going, so please bring something for the "hat." The Troupe's appearance is sponsored by the North Beach Business Association for a second year.

For more information call 415-285-1717 or visit www.sfmt.org.

The San Francisco Mime Troupe would like to acknowledge the North Beach Business Association's sponsorship, which is making its free performance possible.

NORTH MOUNTAIN ZENDO

North Mountain Zendo, hosted by the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center at 660 Lombard St., meets every weekday at 7 a.m. for meditation. All are welcome to join us. Monday through Thursday we sit until 7:30 a.m. On Friday, there's a short talk and Q&A session; then, all other conditions being favorable, the group goes out for pie (or some other tasty breakfast food). The group is led by Zachary Smith, who has 20 years of experience with meditation practice, mostly at the San Francisco Zen Center.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Zachary at zachary@stupahead.com or Susan Weisberg at swhys@att.net.

'COULD THE DESIGN OF A CITY INFLUENCE OR DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM SOCIALLY INTERACTING?'

My name is Caroline Scanlon and I am a student at Stanford University. For my major, Urban Studies, I am conducting a research project that investigates social interactions, specifically among neighbors, in the Richmond District and North Beach. I am particularly interested in these neighborhoods because of the difference in urban design.

My project aims to discover if there is a correlation between diversity of land use and social interaction through comparing residents' perceived closeness to neighbors. I will be studying the effects of different urban designs in San Francisco in order to understand one of the mechanisms by which urban design may influence happiness.

Take the survey at the link below to help me investigate your neighborhood in North Beach further and discover its sociability. For any questions or concerns, contact Caroline Scanlon at cscanlon@stanford.edu.

https://stanforduniversity.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6mOWiwyIJZPCN3n

San Francisco Mime Troupe's Summer
Show, "Ripple Effect."

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The San Francisco Mime Troupe
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— Featuring Mal Sharpe and the Big Money in Jazz Band —

Sunday, Sept. 21, 2014

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

at the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club

NEXT Village fosters a strong feeling of community and a strong mutual support system that enables residents of San Francisco's northeast corner to lead vibrant, active and healthy lives as they age, while living in their homes and neighborhoods. We are a 501(c)(3) organization and aim to provide 80 percent of our services through our volunteer corps, NEXT Neighbors. Founded in 2009, NEXT Village is part of the nationwide village movement.

On September 21, please join the board, advisory committee and volunteers of NEXT Village to see your friends, sing along to the music of Mal Sharpe and the Big Money in Jazz Band and listen to a wonderful medley of jazz from the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Members, friends and their guests will enjoy light refreshments, drinks and entertainment to support our growing organization.

For more information on NEXT Village San Francisco, visit their website at <http://www.nextvillagesf.org>.

COLLECTIVE MEMORIES: THE SHADOWS

Compiled by Julie Jaycox

The news on the Hill these days is that the Shadows is up for sale, once again. Starting out as a school, then grocery store, later a candle-lit tearoom, which was permitted and upgraded to a popular and long-lasting German restaurant, followed by French fare segueing into Italian, the building has been transformed into a private residence by its current owners.

With the interior redone in Arts-and-Crafts style, except for the original chandeliers and mural of a Roman party, it is no longer the place that everyone tells me about. When I mention the name, I hear stories. So I decided to ask people about their memories of

the Shadows, specifically the good memories of having been there, and I have heard a lot. Here are a few:

Bar Life

The Shadows bar was the greatest space in the city for a drink. The bartender, Jose, was a Cuban American, who came over in 1958 when Bautista was overthrown by Fidel. The space was intimate, the views expansive.

—Joe Butler

I ate at the Shadows a lot back in the day. The bar was small and cozy and offered one of the best views in the city, the Mark notwithstanding. I also like German food, and the Shadows dished up some pretty decent grub when this city still had a number of good German joints, including Beethoven at the corner of Powell and

Union (Sushi Hunter today).


But what I really loved about the place — and maybe I only came to realize this in hindsight — was that the Shadows represented a link to Telegraph Hill's bohemian past. There were still some modest cottages around and rents were relatively cheap, but this was the '70s and the lawyers already outnumbered the artists. The Hill is very different now, although some people like to pretend that nothing's changed. Never went to the place when it was Dalla Torre. The magic was gone by then. Cheers.

—Tony Long

I remember the Shadows, but not Dalla Torre; was that a later name? My second husband, Ron Crotty, a

continued on page 13

Thanks, North Beach, for your support as we approach our 5th anniversary!



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EVERYTHING MUST GO — ALMA'S SHOP

By Chris Chouteau

The neighborhood has changed dramatically over the decades from a hard-working community of Italian immigrants to a haven for beat generation artists and poets and the experimental theater and risqué nightclubs of the permissive 1960s. The flavors of all three can still be found in the polyethnic, postmodern tourist attraction that is today's North Beach, where local writers and drinkers sit behind sunlit windows at Puccini's or Trieste and stir their coffee alongside weekenders from Walnut Creek and visitors from overseas.

Underneath the melodic overlays of the beats, the hippies, the hawkers and the barkers, however, lay the bass rhythms of our neighborhood's Italian roots. They resonate from the spires of Saints Peter and Paul Church and the winged, tricolor crest of the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club and echo among the many Italian businesses and restaurants spilling out from Columbus and Grant avenues onto side streets and alleyways. Until now, Alma's Shop for Dressmaking and Alterations was one of them.

I first noticed the hand-written note, "Closed while the building is remodeled," taped to the glass door of her shop at Union and Varennes streets earlier this spring. It struck me that no date was given for reopening and the sign had a hasty, scribbled look that lent it an air of sudden or unexpected change. I put my pants back in the trunk of my car and thought, "These will have to wait a few weeks." As I drove off, I was left with an unsettled feeling.

Then, in late April, I saw Alma in front of the shop and I pulled over to say hello and ask when she would be coming back to work. She looked at me with a worldly sadness in her eyes and said, "I won't be com-

ing back." The man standing behind her volunteered, "She's been evicted."

It's a great loss. She was part of the old North Beach, emigrating from Italy when she was 16, eventually living above North Beach Pizza with her husband and 4-year-old daughter, then moving to the Marina in 1969. For 47 years she occupied the storefront at 444 Union St.

Each August she closed her shop, occasionally traveling back to Italy, but the rest of the year she made and altered dresses. Alma also repaired many articles of clothing, extending the life of my wardrobe and giving me the joy of being looked after in a way that seems to have passed with the last century. Everything is disposable these days and the notion of repairing rather than replacing something is antithetical to the seemingly planned obsolescence of all our trappings and gadgets.

My interactions with her were confined to the brief professional review she gave each torn or damaged garment I brought in, shaking her head as if to say, "What have you done this time?," followed by a gentle reassurance that she would do her best to fix it. She would have me write my phone number on a scrap of paper, which she then pinned to the fabric. When she called a few days later, I would come back and admire her



Alma's Shop as it was at 444 Union St.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CHOUTEAU

handiwork -- my jacket, pants, shirt, or shorts returned to their former glory. There, still pinned to the garment, would be the scrap of paper, now with a scrawled amount due, typically a few dollars. She always dealt in cash out of a drawer or her purse. When she didn't have change, or I didn't have my wallet, we would owe each other until next time.

A good neighborhood is like a family. Alma was a motherly figure to many, a sister, grandmother, or aunt to others. She was this neighborhood to me, at least the way I found it decades ago. The closing of her shop, like the closing of Speedy's, takes something away that can not be replaced.



The Shadows continued from page 12

jazz musician, and I used to go there on his days off in the '50s. He was the original bass player for the Dave Brubeck Quartet, which played the Black Hawk for a few months after starting out in the East Bay. Ron and I were usually high when we went there and consequently I was usually ravenously hungry and loved the food, though I cannot remember it now. Also loved the mysterious dark ambience and the view. Met Ron at the Black Hawk on Turk Street when I lived across the street at the YMCA. The "Y" and Ron are still around; he lives in Oakland and plays at the Museum Cafe at the Oakland Art Museum when it is open.

—Joan Wood

Workers

I often went to the Shadows in the very early 1960s; it was inexpensive and good. But my craziest memory is an evening 30 years later, after finishing more than a dozen Weight Watchers' stores in the Bay Area. W.W. threw the party and it was nonstop vino and food and more vino. Somehow I stumbled over the Hill and home, with a commemorative plate, engraved "October 1990."

—Chris Stockton, architect

About 1996-97, Jeffrey brought in 8-10 photo prints of WPA murals. Upon reflection, they were probably Bernard Zakheim's works from Coit Tower. The prints were about 24"-by-30." We matted and framed them for the opening of Dalla Torre restaurant. I never went in there to see them in place. I should have. I did other framing for him over several years for various restaurants. He never stayed in the shop long enough for me to hear what he was up to. That building is a landmark and I would be interested to find out what finally becomes of it.

—Joseph Ellin, *The Artisans Picture Framing*

Dating

Going back to the '50s, I was a student at Stanford. On the few trips up to the city with a date, it seemed to me that the Shadows was the place to make a romantic impression. On a clear winter late afternoon, the small bar upstairs had a reflected, colorful view of the bay looking eastward framed by gardens and the intimacy of the neighborhood. There was no place like it any-

where. Shadows was the appropriate name — inaccessibility, scale, patina and the sun was always gone.

—Mike O'Shea

Yes, the Shadows is very special to me and Maxine. When we first got married and came to San Francisco (from Buffalo, N.Y.), the Shadows was the very *first* restaurant we went to. Of course, it was also nice to be living in an apartment only a half a block down Montgomery, next to the now gone Julius's Castle . . . our very first apartment in S.F., as well. We just celebrated our 55th wedding anniversary and would have gladly gone to the Shadows for "old time" sake, if it was still there.

The bench in the waiting room (with the view) was definitely a classic to remember . . . the cracks on the old seat still remain in my memory. It was well varnished, but so discolored one would wonder if it was wet. The view was amazing and the dining room was what we former Easterners would say, "leaves something to be desired." But, we couldn't knock that tasty German food!

I also remember when we made our reservation for dinner our first night in San Francisco. No one told us how to get there except to say "just follow Montgomery Street to the bottom." However, we were never told we would hit the dead end coming from Broadway. We almost gave up except for a young man who coincidentally was on his way to work at the Shadows. In those days, the parking was not a problem so we never suffered the frustrations that would face us now, if it still existed. Eventually, we moved to Saratoga in the South Bay and left this great city for 34 years. However, on almost every visit we would be certain to reserve at least one night for dinner at the Shadows.

Yes . . . it was our favorite.

—Mel Solomon

Fifty-five years ago, when Mel and I were young, inexperienced newlyweds, just settled in California on the San Francisco peninsula, we wanted to celebrate our new lives on the West Coast with a night out in the big city. What was the finest, typically San Francisco restaurant? The Shadows, of course! We felt like real sophisticates when we were seated at a window table overlooking San Francisco Bay. We toasted our arrival in California. As we looked out at the bay, we talked about how lucky some people were to live in this place,

with this view — a goal that seemed like an impossible dream to two totally naive 20-plus-year-olds.

Fifteen years ago, we moved to this fabulous city and took our first apartment — on Montgomery, two doors from the Shadows restaurant, which no longer existed as a restaurant. As we sat at a table in the window of our first San Francisco apartment, we toasted our new life as San Francisco residents. We were reminded of how impossible it seemed, 40 years prior, to even think we could ever be the lucky ones living on Telegraph Hill with this view of San Francisco Bay — and here we were, two of the very lucky ones.

—Maxine Solomon

Art and I were new lovebirds on Telegraph Hill. We would wind down the Hill frequently to eat at Dalla Torre. We loved the little booth on the right, where you could close the curtain, eat and view the city, get a kiss or two in and have a private dinner. I was in love with him, Telegraph Hill, my new friends in North Beach and Dalla Torre. It is such a precious memory.

—Carol Peterson

One story is by Steve Hord. He told it in a piece he wrote for *The Semaphore* called "Bachelors on The Hill." He said it was common practice for the male swingers, who lived on the Hill and worked on Montgomery Street in the '50s, to have a few drinks with their dates, then repair to the Shadows at its busiest hour. The wait time they were told would be an hour or so. The bachelor would get his date to agree that that was too long a wait, so they would descend the Hill and dine at one of those affordable North Beach spaghetti mills. In this way, he would impress his companion with his classy first choice that, alas, didn't work out, while treating the woman to a meal well within his budget.

The second story has to do with Dalla Torre. When I was "courting" — what a great old-fashioned word — Carol in the '90s, we would go down to Dalla Torre and ask to be seated in the alcove facing Montgomery Street that could be curtained off. Student of the Hill that I am, one day I read that it was to this very alcove that Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall would repair to paw each other after a day's filming of "Dark Passage." After that, things really got hot and heavy.

—Art Peterson





By Richard Zimmerman

Digital Flash Art Show

Since the arrival of the camera-equipped smartphone, the number of pictures taken in a day has become a deluge. For example, one photo website – Flickr – reports users upload more than 350 million photos each day. With ubiquitous smartphone users constantly snapping pictures of our neighborhood – and our neighbors – it seemed only natural to have an art show that featured photographs of North Beach taken in a short time.

The Digital Flash Art show, on May 10 at Canessa Gallery, featured photographs taken in a 24-hour period before the show. Capturing unique and revelatory scenes of North Beach and Telegraph Hill was a primary goal of the show. The show, a takeoff of earlier Flash Art shows that featured prints, was inspired by the flood of photos taken by smartphone users.

Photographs entered included people dancing in the street, couples in a quiet moment, a scene from the new North Beach library and, of course, a selfie. Even as omnipresent as smartphones are, not a single picture entered was taken with a smartphone. Local jazz musician Daniel Heffez took honors for the evening's best – as selected by the audience – with his picture of Saints Peter and Paul Church, shown here. The picture captures the spirit of the show by showing a smartphone user snapping a picture of the church.

Others who entered photos included Jennifer Barone, Jon Golinger, Tom Noyes, Connie Jean Schake,



Daniel Heffez's winning photograph of Saints Peter and Paul Church.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL HEFFEZ

Jen Haeusser, Lynnne Rabinowitz, Steve Rabinowitz and Richard Zimmerman. Pictures entered can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/1r6vO6l>.

It was a fun evening; people found the "assignment" challenging. A special thank you to Zach Stewart, Canessa Gallery, who hosted the show.

Coit Tower Murals Restoration

A celebration reopened the restored Coit Tower on May 14. As Emmy Lou Packard said, "Coit Tower is actually one of the most beautiful art museums in San Francisco." The restored murals on the ground floor illustrate just how true her statement is. Let's hope the murals will be protected in the future. Pictures from the celebration can viewed at <http://bit.ly/1h2SXCB>

New Gallery

In early June, a new art gallery opened in the neighborhood. Naivasha Studio and Gallery occupies 1499 Grant Ave., former site of North Beach Pizza. The gallery is owned and operated by Nathan Goldsmith and his wife, Lauren Story Goldsmith

The gallery currently features Nathan's abstract landscape paintings. They expect to eventually host paint and wine nights, abstract painting workshops, various forms of evening meditation, live music and other events.

Be sure to stop by and welcome them to North Beach.



MEET THE NEW THD BOARD MEMBERS

At the Telegraph Hill Dwellers Annual Meeting and Membership Dinner at the Bocce Café on April 21, the Board of Directors' slate for 2014-2015 was voted on and approved. For a complete list of THD board members and committees, refer to page 15.:

Effective May 1, the new board members are: Marilee Gaffney, Jen Haeusser, Amy Loewen, John Reed and Paul Webber. Thank you, Marilee, Jen, and Amy for providing the following bios.



Marilee Gaffney

Marilee has been a long-time resident of San Francisco, although raised in the Chicago area. Marilee has been living in Telegraph Hill for the past 12 years and calls it home. In addition to being a new board member of the THD, she also serves

on the Advisory Board for the Friends of Washington Square, and is working

on the Perimeter Planting Plan to beautify the park. Marilee is also on the Board of Pelican Media, Judy Irving's nonprofit. Marilee is a landscape designer, and has had her own business for more than 20 years. She designs gardens for residential clients in the Bay Area, and collaborates with each client to ensure that their garden reflects their own tastes and lifestyles. Marilee was selected to design both a meditation garden and a children's garden for La Casa de las Madres, a battered women's shelter.

When not working, Marilee can be found hanging out with Jato, her time-share 16-year-old Jack Russell Terrier.



Jen Haeusser

I grew up in the farm lands of Lancaster, Pa. My dad was Amish and my mom was Mennonite, but ended up leaving their communities and getting married. Out of high

school, I went to school for cosmetology and worked in that industry for five years before joining a nonprofit

called YWAM. I've now been working with this organization for more than 10 years and have been able to do community development in 13 different nations. I've lived in San Francisco for four years and in North Beach for two. My husband and I love this neighborhood and think that it is the best one in the city! We are passionate about seeing neighbors connect in meaningful ways and helping the neighborhood to be a place of safety, beauty and refreshment.



Amy Loewen

Amy is a native of Toronto, Canada, and has lived on the Hill with her husband, Carlo Arreglo, for 11 years. Amy is an English language instructor at Laney College and UC Berkeley Extension. She has also worked in

museums and coordinated educational tours to Japan. Amy loves traveling, biking the hills of San Francisco, making her own beer and spending time in nature. ✂

THD MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Tom Noyes
Membership Chair

I am pleased to return to Membership for my third tenure with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

I would like to thank Scott Elliott, the prior financial secretary, for his efforts and contributions. Scott also helped significantly in the creation of our new membership brochure along with my neighbor, Mike Madrid, who took Scott's ideas and molded them into the brochure. We have needed this for years. Make sure you pick up one (or more!) at the next THD event. Or ask me, I will send some to you. Give them to a friend or neighbor and suggest they join THD. Our best recruitment of members comes from your friends and neighbors.

For a few years, THD has supported online payment and dues notices via e-mail. If you are comfortable

with receiving notices by e-mail, please make sure your spam blockers permit "@thd.org," or at least add "membership@thd.org" and "thdmembership@thd.org" to be valid senders. By default, if you have an e-mail address with us, we e-mail your dues notices. We fear we have not been getting notices to all of you because of spam blockers.

We use postal mail for reminders, which adds to costs that take away from our support of programs, committees and issues most important to our organization. We are happy to send postal mail for the initial notice, if that is better for you. Just let us know at membership@thd.org. There is also a place on both the mail letter and e-mail to let you indicate your preference. Please do so.

Dues are THD's major source of income. We thank all of you who add a contribution to your dues

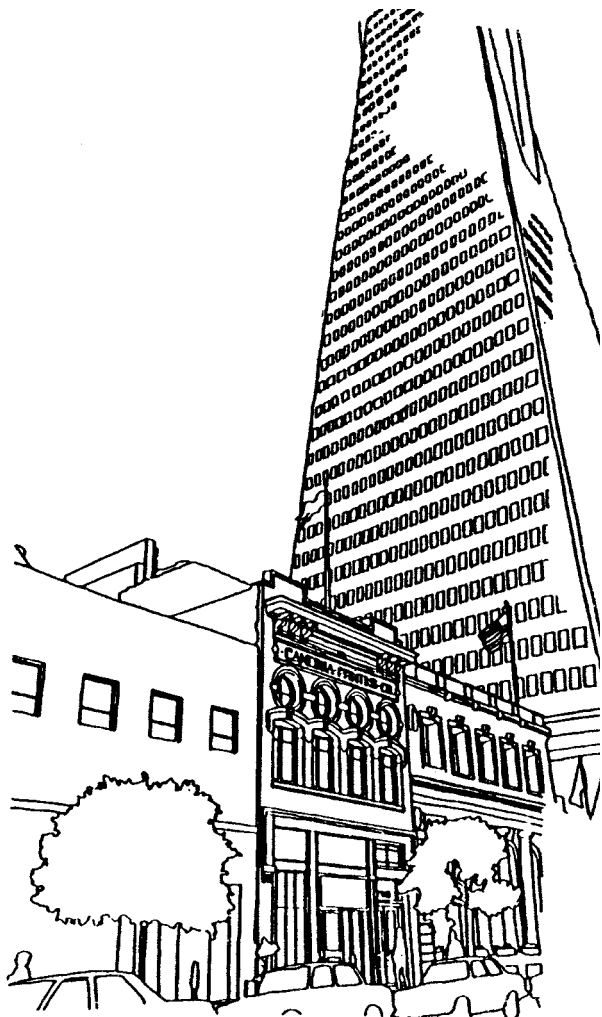
payment. Also, your help with approaching potential members is our best way to grow.

We thank you for your continuing membership and ask that you please let us know how we can make it easier for you to continue your membership. E-mail me at membership@thd.org, or send mail to THD, Membership, P.O. Box 330159, San Francisco, CA 94133.

Once more, don't forget to pick up membership brochures at our next event and hand them out!

Tom Noyes, Financial Secretary (aka Membership)
P.S.: I think I have figured out why the position is called "financial secretary." Have you ever wondered about that? It only took me 15-plus years. Watch this spot in *The Semaphore* for my guess in a coming (not necessarily next!) issue! I am interested in your hypotheses. Or talk to me at an event.






ADVERTISEMENT

Save the date!
In celebration of the Telegraph Hill Dweller's 60th Anniversary, please come to the **Second Annual Street Party** on Upper Calhoun Terrace.
Sunday, September 21
2-5pm
And bring the kids!

For information on the following topics of concern to our members, please contact the committee chairs indicated on the listing at the right.

- Neighborhood Safety
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Visit the THD website to explore a wealth of neighborhood history and get the latest information about what's happening on the Hill.

TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS
Schedules of Committee Meetings
PLANNING & ZONING: Last Thursdays. Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.
Look to the THD website for information on THD events. **Log on to <http://www.thd.org>**

THD Welcomes New Members JOIN NOW

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Complete and mail to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

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The Semaphore

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Issue 206
Summer 2014



THE SEMAPHORE

#206

Summer 2014

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North Beach Legacy Bars & Restaurants

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